

VZCZCXRO9857  
PP RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV  
DE RUEHBM #0278/01 0471600  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
P 161600Z FEB 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3715  
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BUCHAREST 000278

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NCE - WSILKWORTH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/16/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [ENRG](#) [SENV](#) [PTER](#) [EPET](#) [TU](#)  
RS, UP, GG, BU  
SUBJECT: ROMANIA SEEKS "POSITIVE POLITICAL SIGNAL" FROM  
U.S. FOR PROPOSED JUNE BLACK SEA FORUM AND SUMMIT

REF: A. 05 BUCHREST 1778  
[1](#)B. 05 BUCHAREST 1989  
[1](#)C. 05BUCHAREST 2017

Classified By: Ambassador Nichols Taubman  
for Reasons 1.4 (b), (c) and (d)

[1](#)1. U) This is an Action Request. Please see paragrap 11.

[1](#)2. (C) Last summer, Romania proposed a "Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership Summi" as a launching pad for a process of dialogue ad partnership among Black Sea states, the U.S. an the E.U. (Refs) The proposed forum focuses on "oft security" concerns such as promoting democrati governance, economic development and environmenal protection. Originally envisaged for Decembe, the forum's proposed date is now 5 June. Romana plans to invite the littoral states plus Armena, Azerbaijan, Greece, and Moldova. The GOR envisages the forum producing a "Joint Declaration" by "heads of state or governments" from the Black Sea area. A key goal of the event is to launch the "Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership" as a regional platform for concrete cooperation. (The full texts of the proposed declaration, draft program and other documents prepared by the MFA were forwarded to EUR/NCE Bill Silkworth on February 10.))

[1](#)3. (C) Romanian interlocutors have expressed to us their concern that, without U.S. support, the forum could either transpire at a disappointingly low level or even be cancelled. This would be a considerable embarrassment for President Basescu and the Romanian government, and would represent a significant setback for Bucharest's efforts to play a more active role in promoting stability and reform in the region. In a recent conversation with MFA Director General for Political Affairs Ovidiu Dranga, one of the MFA officials responsible for organizing the forum, Dranga underscored that U.S. support for the event would help convince reluctant countries to participate at an appropriate level. While he stressed that the GOR seeks USG weigh-in with other countries, he felt, rather contradictorily, that some countries (read: Russia and Turkey) might hesitate to participate in a forum that they perceived as U.S.-driven. Another area in which Dranga solicited input was in the content of the draft Joint Declaration and program for the proposed forum. Dranga also made clear that the GOR envisioned inviting NGO and business leaders as well.

[1](#)4. (C) Other MFA interlocutors, including the Ministry's number two official, State Secretary for Global Affairs Teodor Baconschi, have also shared their views on the Black Sea Forum initiative with us in recent days. In Baconschi's

words, Bucharest is looking for a "positive political signal" from the U.S. as well as from Romania's principal European partners. Romania had accepted the "guidance" that it had received from its allies to focus more on "regional outreach" and "soft security issues." What it needed now was a direct expression of support for the June 5 Forum from Washington, EU capitals, NATO and the OSCE.

15. (C) At this point, there are already some encouraging signs about participation. The British Embassy has informed us that Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott is penciled-in for the event. Bulgaria and Georgia, Baconschi reported, were fully in support of Romania's initiative and our GOR sources have expressed confidence that both Tbilisi and Sofia would be represented in June at the head-of-state level. Likewise, both Romanian officials as well as Ukrainian and Moldovan Embassy staff have told us Presidents Yushchenko and Voronin have agreed in principle to attend, Yushchenko in part because Basescu's recent visit to Kiev was planned with the understanding the Ukrainian president would take part in the Black Sea Forum.

16. (S) The calculations in Ankara and Moscow, apparently, are less straightforward, however. Baconschi described a dialogue with his Turkish counterparts that has linked the level of Turkish participation in the June Black Sea forum to Romania's position on BLACKSEAFOR, a sore point between the two countries. Romania, with the quiet support of Bulgaria, had resisted Russian and Turkish overtures last fall to give BLACKSEAFOR a more robust role in the region, and a six-month "cooling-off" period had been declared after a stormy meeting in Tbilisi in December. In return for a Romanian decision to allow BLACKSEAFOR to expand its mandate and open up intelligence sharing among the member states, including Russia, Turkey has indicated it would agree to have Prime

BUCHAREST 00000278 002 OF 002

Minister Erdogan take part in the Black Sea Forum. It was a form of "friendly blackmail," Baconschi observed: "Make BLACKSEAFOR operational and we'll come up with a high-level attendee at the Forum." Otherwise, Ankara would take part, but at a much more modest level. Other Romanian interlocutors have consistently told us that they are loathe to share intelligence with the Russians under the rubric of BLACKSEAFOR, underscoring that an expanded BLACKSEAFOR would provide opportunities for Russian intelligence gathering near new U.S. military facilities on the Black Sea coast.

17. (C) As for Moscow, our GOR contacts offer conflicting analyses and appear to have wildly divergent expectations. The MFA's Director-General for "Wider Europe," Razvan Rusu, was upbeat as recently as February 10 about the prospects for a high-level Russian presence. Maintaining that it was not out of the question for President Putin to attend, he told us that he would be "very surprised" if neither the Russian President or FM Lavrov made it for the June forum. This rosy outlook was flatly contradicted by one of President Basescu's national security advisors, Constantin Degeratu, who said on February 9 that for Moscow to be represented at the Black Sea Forum at the deputy FM level would "in and of itself be a success."

18. (C) Since initially bruiting the proposed Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership Summit with us last August, GOR interlocutors have frequently reminded us that they view active U.S. support for the forum as the sine qua non of its success. Since setting a firm June 5 date, the urgency of their demarches has increased. In post's view, Romania's proposed forum properly focuses on "soft" security issues and provides a good starting point for serious intergovernmental discussions on Black Sea regional cooperation. The Romanians have made an earnest effort to explore Black Sea regional cooperation in areas that are less problematic to their more reluctant littoral partners, especially Russia and Turkey, as we have been consistently urging them ever since NSA Hadley's October visit to Bucharest. Consequently, the draft program includes workshops on themes such as good governance,

sustainable development, and cooperation in joint energy development. Further, the proposed Joint Declaration singles out the importance of soft security issues.

¶9. (C) From our perspective, an ideal USG senior participant might be a Cabinet-level representative such as the Secretary of Energy or Commerce, whose presence would reinforce the impulse for broad engagement and regional consultation in the Black Sea area, while reinforcing our policy message in a priority area like energy security or expanded trade and investment. By lending our support to Romania's forum, we could contribute to a more positive dialogue among the often fractious Black Sea countries and, eventually, more tangible cooperation.

¶10. (C) No less importantly, a straightforward endorsement of Bucharest's June forum would demonstrate that we take President Basescu's policy agenda seriously, just as he has consistently backed our priority goals in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. No topic is nearer and dearer to his heart than the future of the Black Sea region, and to Romania's long-term strategy to play a positive transformative role on the margins of Europe. Now is the moment for a clear commitment on our part to participate in the Black Sea Forum, at an appropriate senior level, and to make clear we are ready to help advise the Romanians on how best to make their initiative a success.

¶11. (C) Action Request: Post requests guidance and views we may share with the GOR regarding the proposed forum. Specifically, Post seeks the Department's approval to assure the GOR that the U.S. fully supports the event and will tell other governments that it plans to participate at an appropriate senior level.

¶12. (U) Amembassy Bucharest's reporting telegrams are available on the Bucharest SIPRNet website:  
[www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/bucharest](http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/bucharest)  
TAUBMAN